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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000512

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [ASEC](#) [KU](#) [SA](#) [JO](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: RAID NETS SAUDI, JORDANIAN MILITANTS; KUWAIT
FIGHTS TERROR WITH ALL AVAILABLE TOOLS

REF: A. KUWAIT 446

[B](#). KUWAIT 417

[C](#). KUWAIT 406

[1](#)1. Summary: In the latest round of raids on suspected militants since security crackdowns began January 10, police on February 5 reportedly captured five suspected militants, including two Saudi Arabian and three Jordanian citizens. Kuwaiti security forces have been authorized and are using all necessary measures to round up suspected militants. The security forces are enforcing existing laws long ignored and the political establishment is proposing the strengthening of others. End Summary.

Raid Nets Five Militants

[1](#)2. Kuwaiti security forces backed by armored vehicles raided two houses in the largely bidoon (stateless) Sulaiibiya neighborhood west of Kuwait City on February 5, capturing five suspected militants, among them two Saudi and three Jordanian citizens, according to local press reports. Although the incident ended without fatalities, local residents reported sporadic gunfire and security forces used explosives to enter one of the buildings. The raid also netted KD 20,000 (approximately USD 66,000) and two weapons, along with an unspecified number of Kuwaiti and Saudi passports.

[1](#)3. According to local dailies, the captured Saudi nationals had been granted Saudi nationality during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, when they fled to Saudi Arabia. Prior to this they had been stateless employees of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior. Press reports indicate that all five were brothers and all were formerly bidoon. A military contact confirmed that two of the five had been serving in the Kuwait armed forces.

[1](#)4. The raid was the latest in a series of efforts the GOK has undertaken to root out what it deems 'Al-Qaeda'-linked terrorists who had been planning operations against Western and GOK targets. Local Arabic daily Al-Qabas reported the brother of slain militant Nasser Khlaif Al-Enezi (ref b) told security forces that his brother had "plotted to kidnap U.S. soldiers and Western civilians and execute them and film the process." Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed has vowed to "hunt (terrorists) down everywhere," and has authorized his cabinet to use all available resources to support the effort.

Lifting the Veil for Security

[1](#)5. Among the more controversial actions the GOK has taken is the enforcement of a long-standing but unenforced 1984 law banning fully veiled women from driving. After a fully veiled man was reportedly stopped at a police checkpoint on January 25, police began ticketing veiled drivers. Local dailies reported February 4 that Kuwaiti police had handed out 155 tickets to veiled female motorists during the February 3-4 weekend. Press reports indicate veiled women interviewed randomly at checkpoints support the enforcement of the law if it improves security, although some men were less enthusiastic about the new steps.

[1](#)6. Conservative MPs, some of whom have been criticized for attempting to get suspected militants released from custody, have petitioned the GOK to utilize female police officers to identify female drivers at checkpoints. Tribal Islamist MP Khaled Al Adwah represented the group of MPs in a meeting with the Ministry of Interior officials in which they "urged the ministry not to expand the issue of showing faces in order not to create problems, especially that people here do not accept the faces of their women to be uncovered on streets." Security officials at numerous checkpoints have insisted that veiled women identify themselves by showing their faces.

Changes in School Curricula; Training Imams

[1](#)7. The GOK has also announced a series of measures aimed at curbing the growth of extremist ideology. Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Adel Al-Falah

said February 4 that the Ministry would launch training programs for imams and mosque staff on the promotion of the concepts of moderation and tolerance. Correspondingly, the Ministry has added two new subjects to Kuwaiti school curricula: "Life Skills," which covers dialogue and respect for others and Islamic values, and a second subject covering the upbringing of responsible citizens.

GOK to Push Stronger Press Law

18. Claiming it is acting to curb extremism, the GOK also has announced it will attempt to pass a much criticized, more restrictive version of the current press and publications law. The current law prohibits publications from directly criticizing the Amir and provides for fines and imprisonment for those who attack religion or incite people to commit crimes. The proposed law, which was debated in the National Assembly in 2003 and 2004 and did not pass, would allow the GOK to close offending newspapers by fiat, expand the government's powers of censorship and significantly weaken libel protection for newswriters and publishers.

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